

To the commissioners of the FCC

Dear Sirs and Madam;

I am writing to comment on FCC proceeding # 02-277. In your upcoming vote on ownership rules of media outlets, I urge you to consider that relaxation of these rules must be viewed with regard to the potential (likely?) downside that can result. The diminution of voices, as more outlets are controlled by fewer companies, impairs the ability of the public to remain informed of important issues. All efforts must be made to preserve the diversity of news, analysis and opinion. While new technologies are helping provide this diversity, it is premature to sacrifice the more traditional media (newspapers and TV) to profits and homogenized mass media. Perhaps in 10 years the technology will be in place to allow media consolidation without impacting the flow of information to the public, but currently most people get their information from newspapers, radio and TV. The lack of news coverage of this issue before the FCC, and news coverage of the war in Iraq, are both empirical evidence that corporate interests and obligations take precedence over providing in-depth analysis of important topics. Consequently the marketplace of ideas must be preserved by limiting ownership of mass media.

Thank you

Mark Fuhrmann, Ph.D.